

'I had to take care of my buddies'



Charles Burke of
Lexington, Ky.

Veteran funds gift annuity, receives generous income for life and unexpectedly learns about disability benefits he may have earned

Charles Burke was not yet a DAV member when an article in a Fidelity newsletter about the income and tax benefits of charitable gift annuities caught his eye. The article also explained how gift annuities help charities. As a longtime DAV donor, he asked if DAV had such a program. Within weeks, he had funded a gift annuity with the DAV Charitable Service Trust.

"I had to take care of my buddies!" said Burke. "I reached a point in my life where I could do this, so I did. The income I receive from the annuity is icing on the cake."

Burke's story doesn't end with his generosity. After deciding to become a life member, he learned about new Agent Orange-related benefits for Blue Water Navy veterans like him. As an

A-4 Skyhawk plane captain aboard the USS Intrepid, Burke likely had contact with Agent Orange. The Department of Veterans Affairs later diagnosed him with conditions linked to the chemical. On Jan. 1, 2020, the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019 went into effect after years of tireless advocacy by DAV. This act extends the presumption of herbicide exposure, such as Agent Orange, to Blue Water Navy veterans like Burke who served as far as 12 nautical miles from the shore of Vietnam.

“Little did I know that I’d also be helping myself,” said Burke. “If it weren’t for connecting more with DAV, I wouldn’t have known that the conditions could be service-connected.” DAV has since helped him file a claim.

Today, Burke is thankful that his own Navy service dovetailed into a long civilian career as an aviation mechanic, including maintenance of private planes for horse farm owners around Lexington, Ky. Now, in his retirement years, the fixed payments he is receiving for life from his gift annuity are boosting his security. Best of all, he is honored to “help his buddies.”

Our charitable gift annuity program is one of many special ways to make a lasting difference in the lives of veterans and, in so doing, “live beyond your years.” Call, write or visit dav.giftplans.org and click “Calculate Your Gift” to learn how you can fund a gift annuity and boost your own retirement income.